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14 CLAIMS

- 1. A television signal receiver (20) having an emergency alert function, comprising:
- a tuner (22) operative to tune a frequency including emergency alert signals indicating a type of emergency event; and
- a processor (27) operative to enable an alert output responsive to the emergency alert signals, wherein the alert output is provided in accordance with a user selectable alert mode corresponding to the type of emergency event.

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- 2. The television signal receiver (20) of claim 1, further comprising an interface (50) operative to enable a user to turn the alert output on and off.
- 3. The television signal receiver (20) of claim 1, wherein the processor (27) is further operative to enable a plurality of alert outputs responsive to the emergency alert signals, and the plurality of alert outputs are provided in accordance with a plurality of user selectable alert modes corresponding to the type of emergency event.
- 4. The television signal receiver (20) of claim 3, wherein at least one of the plurality of alert outputs is a visual output.
 - 5. The television signal receiver (20) of claim 3, wherein at least one of the plurality of alert outputs is an aural output.

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6. The television signal receiver (20) of claim 3, further comprising an interface (50) operative to enable a user to turn at least one of the plurality of alert outputs on and off.

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- 7. The television signal receiver (20) of claim 6, wherein at least one of the plurality of alert outputs can not be completely turned off by a user.
- 8. A television signal receiver (20) having an emergency alert function, comprising:

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tuning means (22) for tuning a frequency including emergency alert signals indicating a type of emergency event; and

processing means (27) for enabling an alert output responsive to the emergency alert signals, wherein the alert output is provided in accordance with a user selectable alert mode corresponding to the type of emergency event.

- 9. The television signal receiver (20) of claim 8, further comprising interface means (50) for enabling a user to turn the alert output on and off.
- 10. The television signal receiver (20) of claim 8, wherein the processing means (27) enables a plurality of alert outputs responsive to the emergency alert signals, and the plurality of alert outputs are provided in accordance with a plurality of user selectable alert modes corresponding to the type of emergency event.
 - 11. The television signal receiver (20) of claim 10, wherein at least one of the plurality of alert outputs is a visual output.
 - 12. The television signal receiver (20) of claim 10, wherein at least one of the plurality of alert outputs is an aural output.
 - 13. The television signal receiver (20) of claim 10, further comprising interface means (50) for enabling a user to turn at least one of the plurality of alert outputs on and off.
 - 14. The television signal receiver (20) of claim 13, wherein at least one of the plurality of alert outputs can not be completely turned off by a user.
 - 15. A method (30) for controlling a television signal receiver (20) having an emergency alert function, comprising:
 - tuning a frequency including emergency alert signals indicating a type of emergency event (32); and

providing an alert output responsive to the emergency alert signals, wherein the alert output is provided in accordance with a user selectable alert mode corresponding to the type of emergency event (34).

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- 16. The method (30) of claim 15, further comprised of enabling a user to turn the alert output on and off (35).
- 17. The method (30) of claim 15, further comprised of providing a plurality of alert outputs responsive to the emergency alert signals, and the plurality of alert outputs are provided in accordance with a plurality of user selectable alert modes corresponding to the type of emergency event (34).
- 18. The method (30) of claim 17, wherein at least one of the plurality of alert outputs is a visual output.
 - 19. The method (30) of claim 17, wherein at least one of the plurality of alert outputs is an aural output.
 - 20. The method (30) of claim 17, further comprised of enabling a user to turn at least one of the plurality of alert outputs on and off (35).
- 21. The method (30) of claim 20, wherein at least one of the plurality of alert outputs can not be completely turned off by a user.